

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRON



His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Volunteering Australia, Annual Report 2020-2021

As Patron of Volunteering Australia I am delighted to once again provide the Foreword for the Volunteering Australia Annual Report. As I write, in my mind's eye I can see images of volunteers in the Central West of New South Wales filling sandbags in preparation for rising floodwaters. It was a weekend, it was wet, and the Emergency Services volunteers as well as locals were selflessly putting the safety and welfare of others before themselves. Good people, answering the call to help their community in its hour of need.

Whether its flood or other natural disasters, a pandemic or the countless examples of giving that occur in our communities every day, it is reassuring to know that Volunteering Australia is there, advocating on behalf of volunteering and volunteers. Despite the difficulties of working through a pandemic, Volunteering Australia still managed to achieve much this past year.

You developed new policy positions, including on vaccination advocacy, mental health and disability. In March, you launched a new national Volunteering Resource Hub, comprising best practice resources, research and information, to better support volunteer management across Australia. Your 'Recognise, Reconnect and Reimagine' message during National Volunteer Week helped raise awareness of the vital role that volunteers play in communities across Australia. You made submissions to two Royal Commissions – National Natural Disaster Arrangements, and Aged Care Quality and Safety. And, with an eye to the future of volunteering, you formed partnerships with Save the Children, Sport Australia, and Disability Sport Australia.

My message to all who volunteer is that your nation is grateful for your contribution. Together, you help strengthen our community in just about every way imaginable. We appreciate you, and we thank you.

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FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTER



Senator the Hon Anne Ruston

**Minister for Families and Social Services
Minister for Women's Safety
Senator for South Australia
Manager of Government Business in the Senate**

It has been a challenging year for many Australians and the support of our volunteers to help people through tough times has been incredible.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, more than 5 million Australians rose to the challenge and maintained their involvement in formal volunteering throughout the pandemic.

Volunteers and their communities have supported each other to find new and creative ways to keep volunteering which speaks to the remarkable resilience and generosity that Australians have always shown, in good times and bad.

Each year the Morrison Government provides \$6 million to the volunteering sector through the Volunteer Management Activity which provides opportunities for people to fully participate in the social and economic life their communities have to offer.

This year we committed an additional \$600,000 to help Volunteering Australia develop a new national strategy to reinvigorate volunteering in Australia.

While there has been a decrease in formal volunteering over the last decade, the Government remains committed to working with Volunteering Australia, local organisations and volunteers themselves to map out an ambitious blueprint for the future of volunteering.

Congratulations Volunteering Australia for your bold and visionary steps approach. I am confident volunteering will grow and maintain its place as an essential part of Australian life.

The spirit of volunteering strengthens our communities, fulfilling the lives of those in need and those who selflessly give their time and skills to help.

Thank you to each and every person who has volunteered this year. Your hard work and generosity does not go unnoticed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Ruston'.

Anne Ruston

CHAIR'S REPORT



Volunteering builds community resilience especially as people come together to support each other during difficult times. And whilst volunteering means something different to everyone who engages in it, and to everyone who benefits from it, there is a shared experience that makes our nation a better place.

The 2020-21 financial year has seen Volunteering Australia thrive and we have had a busy year of growth.

It has been a challenging year and the impact of COVID-19 has been felt across Australia, and particularly affected the volunteering community.

Research has shown that an estimated 2.3 million less Australians volunteered in April 2021 than in late 2019. The total number of hours of volunteering is estimated to have fallen by around 293 million hours over a 12-month period since COVID-19.

This implies that the loss in economic output due to the pandemic would be 16.1 per cent higher if volunteering was included, compared to considering paid work only. These findings reinforce the importance of volunteering to the economic and social wellbeing of Australia.

The Volunteering Australia Board has continued to demonstrate committed leadership throughout the year, and we are thankful to have such a strong and skilled group of people at our helm.

This will be my last report as Chair of the Volunteering Australia Board. I have been privileged to contribute to the strategic governance of the volunteering sector over the past 13 years and I'm grateful for the role I've played, leading a journey of change for the organisation.

As we look forward to next year, and as Dr. Michael Drew assumes the Chair, Volunteering Australia will continue to evolve and grow, as we celebrate and advocate for millions of volunteers around the country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MEwington'.

Michelle Ewington
Chair

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



I'm proud to present Volunteering Australia's 2020-21 Annual Report.

In a year of significant societal disruption, volunteers found new 'COVID safe' ways in which to participate in their communities and lessen the challenges associated with living through a pandemic. Whilst the number of active volunteers declined, and despite the challenges, there has been a lot to celebrate. National Volunteer Week is always a highlight of the volunteering calendar and 2021 was no exception. This year, we asked the community to Recognise, Reconnect and Reimagine volunteering while acknowledging the vital role that volunteers play in communities across the country.

We again encouraged people to #waveforvolunteers and we were delighted to see that so many events could be held in person, recognising and thanking the millions of volunteers in Australia. National Volunteer Week also challenged us to think imaginatively about a future in which volunteering can thrive, as we celebrated the contributions of current volunteers.

We initiated our Reinvigorating Volunteering advocacy campaign, which saw Volunteering Australia secure funding from the Australian Government to lead the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering project, commencing in 2022. Additional funding was also granted to develop a national volunteering platform online.

Much of Volunteering Australia's policy and research work has focused on the impact of COVID-19 on volunteering and the need to invest in volunteering. Volunteering Australia also made important contributions about volunteering to the Royal Commissions into Bushfires and Aged Care.

We launched a new national Volunteering Resource Hub, to bring together useful, evidence-based and best practice resources, tools, research and information, to support effective volunteer management across Australia.

As part of our strategy to broaden and deepen our engagement with the volunteering ecosystem, Volunteering Australia is proud to have formed partnerships with Save the Children, Sport Australia and Disability Sports Australia, enabling us to advance and strengthen volunteering with the support of our networks and partners.

The Volunteering Australia staff have again shown remarkable adaptability and resilience in light of COVID-19 and for this we are extremely proud. After four months of leading the organisation in an interim capacity, I am very grateful to have been appointed CEO of Volunteering Australia and look forward to building on our history of effective policy advice, advocacy, and volunteering leadership in Australia.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our outgoing Chair, Michelle Ewington. Michelle joined the Volunteering Australia Board in 2013 and was elected Chair in 2018. During this time she has made a significant contribution to the governance of Volunteering Australia and her leadership was crucial during the transition to an independent Board. I thank her for her guidance and support.

I look forward to the year ahead with enthusiasm and excitement.

A stylized blue ink signature of Mark Pearce.

Mark Pearce
Chief Executive Officer

ABOUT VOLUNTEERING AUSTRALIA

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community.

Vision

A stronger, more connected and resilient Australian community through volunteering.

Purpose

To lead, strengthen, promote and celebrate volunteering in Australia.

Principles

Volunteering Australia has identified the following values to underpin all its work:

The privilege of leadership

Volunteering Australia is the recognised national peak body in volunteering in Australia and plays an important leadership role among its Members, in the sector, and to the community more widely.

Working together

Volunteering Australia works hard to build strong, productive and mutually-beneficial partnerships, and believe the best results arise from effective collaboration with governments, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and individuals.

Reliable information

Volunteering Australia's priorities, decisions, policies and activities are always based on sound evidence and credible research, and it actively seeks to support and encourage the research that's needed to advance the sector.

Being an organisation you can trust

VA understands and appreciate the importance of good governance, financial management and reporting to maintaining its reputation as a credible, trustworthy and sustainable organisation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Volunteering Australia's COVID-19 advocacy led to recognition of, and reference to, volunteers in COVID-19 policy from the Federal Department of Health, including vaccination roll-out.
- We made important contributions to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, leading to a significant increase in visibility of the role of volunteers, particularly during emergency response and recovery.
- We initiated a Reinvigorating Volunteering campaign leading to the funding of the National Strategy for Volunteering project.
- Appointment of new CEO, Mark Pearce.
- We launched a new national Volunteering Resource Hub which includes useful, evidence-based and best practice resources to support effective volunteer management across Australia.
- Celebrations were held during National Volunteer Week, National Student Volunteer Week, International Volunteer Managers Day and International Volunteer Day.
- We formed partnerships with Save the Children Australia, Justice Connect, Sport Australia and Disability Sports Australia enabling us to advance and strengthen volunteering with the support of our networks and partners.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY & POLICY

This year saw Volunteering Australia continue to influence public policy and highlight its impact on Australia's volunteers, and the organisations to which they offer their time.

In consultation with our national policy network, we contributed 15 policy submissions, including to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, following which we were invited to provide evidence to the Committee.

Volunteering was recognised in the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements report. There has been a significant increase in the visibility of the role of volunteers in Australia, particularly during emergency response and recovery. There was renewed recognition of the need for additional federal coordination for national disasters, including arrangements for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.

Volunteers were recognised in the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. The recommendations proposed better funding for organisations to support their volunteers through designated supervision and training, and to offer extended volunteer support for those in aged care and at risk of social isolation.

COVID-19

Much of our policy and advocacy work has focused on COVID-19 and its impact on volunteering.

We produced a position paper on COVID-19 vaccinations, and various factsheets about COVID-19 and its impact on volunteering. We advocated for the inclusion of volunteers in health policies and the Federal Department of Health has recognised, and made reference to, volunteers in its COVID-19 work, including in the vaccination roll-out.

Volunteering Australia was invited to speak at the ALP Pandemic Recovery Jobs and Industry Taskforce about the decline in volunteer numbers due to the pandemic.

We joined with Justice Connect to call on Australian Governments to address the pandemic insurance gap for volunteers. Our joint statement strongly

recommended several options for overcoming this volunteering protection gap.

Reinvigorating Volunteering

Following the profound impact of COVID-19 on volunteering, we embarked on an advocacy campaign to reinvigorate volunteering. The aims were to engage the support of the Australian Government to partner with the sector to reinvigorate volunteering as Australia adapts to living with COVID-19; and to secure the Government's commitment to a more strategic, whole-of-government and national approach to volunteering, recognising the crucial role that volunteering plays to social cohesion and the wellbeing of Australians.

As a result of this campaign, we were delighted to sign agreements with the Australian Government Department of Social Services in March 2021 for a sector-led National Strategy for Volunteering and a volunteering online management project. These projects are to commence in the 2021-22 financial year and are a critically important and unique opportunity to redesign an optimistic future for volunteering in Australia.

Resources

We were delighted to launch the national Volunteering Resource Hub in March 2021. We reviewed hundreds of resources and have compiled over 350 relevant, useful and accessible resources that will help volunteer managers, experienced or new, embrace the National Standards of Volunteer Involvement in their everyday practice.

The national Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program for Professional Leaders of Volunteers has been adopted in most states and territories. CPD is a formal avenue to improve knowledge, skills and future employability for volunteer managers and coordinators.



INFORMATIVE & USEFUL RESEARCH

Our aims for the year have been to ensure our work is informed by research evidence and to lay the foundations for future research. We have pursued these aims through internal research and data analysis and leveraging external relationships.

We undertook research to understand how COVID-19 has affected volunteering and to provide evidence for our Reinvigorating Volunteering advocacy campaign. In partnership with the Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods (CSRM) we produced reports on the *Early impact of COVID-19 on volunteering* and *Volunteering during the first year of COVID-19*. We also published *Re-engaging Volunteers and COVID-19*, drawing on our own stakeholder surveys and official government data.

The Scanlon Foundation granted funding to embark on a project recognising the breadth of volunteering that takes place across multicultural Australia. Commencing in the second half of 2021, *The Story Project* will profile activities and practices that may be unrecognised or unacknowledged.

Volunteering Australia is developing external research partnerships to meet critical knowledge gaps, including being a partner organisation on the successful ARC Linkage project, *Developing a National Rural Volunteering Roadmap*, which will investigate the challenges affecting rural volunteering in Australia.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We continued to work closely with the seven State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies. Our networks, including the CEO Network, Marketing and Communications Group, and Policy Group met throughout the year.

We maintained a strong relationship with the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Our sector partners included the Community Council of Australia, ACOSS and Mental Health Australia and Mark Pearce was invited to be part of the Charities Crisis Cabinet and to sit on the Pro Bono Editorial Board.

Mark Pearce was invited to speak to the ArtsHub Podcast about giving in the arts and discussed how often volunteers' time is not recognised as much as it could be.

Our sector partnerships grew considerably in 2020-21 and we were pleased to sign new partnership

agreements with Justice Connect, Save the Children Australia, Sport Australia and Disability Sports Australia.

The strengthened partnership with Justice Connect (articulated through a formal Memorandum of Understanding) increases the support we can both provide to the volunteering and community sectors, through sharing information and expertise, working on joint advocacy and building the capacity of volunteers and community groups.

Volunteers play a critical role within the Save the Children community and our new partnership with Save the Children Australia aims to promote and positively impact volunteering.

The agreement with Sport Australia will focus on reducing barriers to volunteer recruitment; attracting more volunteers to sport; and increasing volunteer retention and quality of experience.

The Disability Sports Australia (DSA) partnership recognises our shared goal of promoting volunteering in the Australian community and the importance of volunteers in the DSA community.

National Volunteer Week 2021 recognised the vital role that volunteers play in communities across the country. We celebrated with the theme *Recognise, Reconnect and Reimagine* - *recognising* volunteers, *reconnecting* by giving time and *reimagining* how we can better support volunteers.

The Wave Your Appreciation campaign on social media was again popular with heartwarming messages and stories celebrating the nation's volunteers for their dedication and commitment to helping others.

Our media campaign achieved 681 items of coverage, reaching an estimated 35.6 million people across all states and territories of Australia. We had 32 items on television including coverage on ABC News, Channel 7 News, 9 News, Sunrise and SBS.

National Student Volunteer Week celebrated the impact that student volunteers make through volunteering with the theme *Collective Impact: Give. Grow. Connect.*

On International Volunteer Managers Day we celebrated leaders of volunteers and highlighted the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Program for Professional Leaders of Volunteers.

International Volunteer Day shone a spotlight on the power of volunteers. With the message *Together We Can Through Volunteering*, we thanked volunteers and celebrated their efforts despite all the challenges at hand.

With the impact of COVID-19, a greater emphasis was placed on online communication and we remained active through our website, email communication and social media channels.



COLLECTIVE VIABILITY (SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE)

Mark Pearce was appointed as Chief Executive Officer in September 2020 after an exhaustive and rigorous process. A high calibre list of applicants was received, which is a testament to the strength of Volunteering Australia's position as the national peak body for volunteering.

We secured additional Australian Government Department of Social Services funding for National Volunteer Week, the National Strategy for Volunteering and the Volunteer Management Online Project. We also received funds from the Scanlon Foundation for The Story Project and Aon Australia have continued to be our Supporting Partner and sponsor of National Volunteer Week.

We continued to work collaboratively with our seven Foundation Members through regular network meetings, creation of relevant working and steering committees, engagement at Board level, consultation on sector and policy issues, distribution of research and other relevant sector communications, and sharing and development of national resources.

We continued to ensure organisational sustainability and resilience through a regular review of Volunteering Australia's policies, procedures, and frameworks, and the development and implementation of a COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

FINANCIALS

The financial surplus achieved for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 was \$149,869 (FY2020 surplus was \$69,574).

The increased surplus in 2021 from the previous year 2020, was the result of better than expected merchandise income (\$117,263 v \$81,513) and lower than expected costs across VA operations. The focus on cost containment assisted in achieving this result.

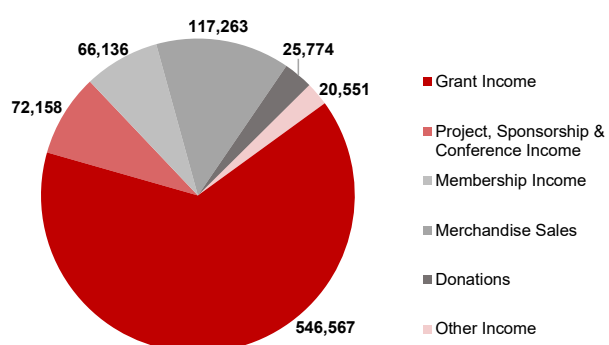
Cash holdings at 30 June 2021 were \$4,794,982 (FY2020 was \$409,459). The increase in cash holdings is largely attributable to the receipt of Commonwealth grants (in advance) for the Volunteer Management Online Project and National Strategy for Volunteering.

The financial outlook for Volunteering Australia is strong, with a commitment to best practice operational reporting.

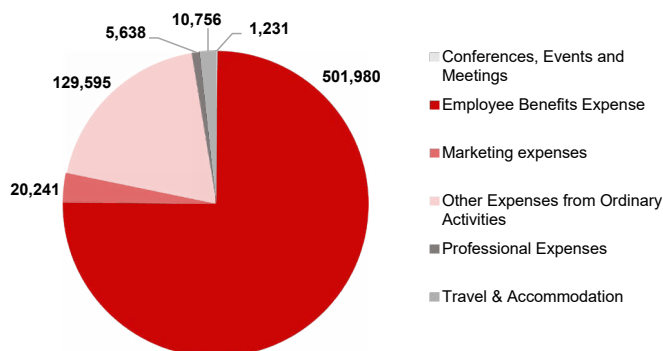
Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2021

	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)	Variance (\$)
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4,794,982	409,459	4,385,523
Trade and other receivables	8,771	37,307	(28,536)
Inventories	13,394	10,461	2,933
Other assets	13,497	18,716	(5,220)
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	4,830,644	475,943	4,354,701
TOTAL ASSETS	4,830,644	475,943	4,354,701
LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable	403,255	7,222	(396,032)
Employee benefits	44,747	19,946	(24,801)
Income in Advance	3,839,999	56,000	(3,783,999)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	4,288,001	83,168	(4,204,832)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	4,288,001	83,168	(4,204,832)
NET ASSETS	542,643	392,774	149,869
EQUITY			
Retained earnings	542,643	392,774	149,869
TOTAL EQUITY	542,643	392,774	149,869

Source of Income FY2021 (\$)



Costs FY2021 (\$)



OUR SUPPORTERS & PEOPLE

Patron

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Our Members

As a membership organisation, Volunteering Australia draws on the expertise of our members and partners to inform policy submissions and strengthen the impact of our advocacy work.

Foundation Members

VolunteeringACT
The Centre for Volunteering (NSW)
Volunteering Queensland
Volunteering SA&NT
Volunteering Tasmania
Volunteering Victoria
Volunteering WA

Associate Members

Associate Members are organisations or individuals who are current members of their State or Territory volunteering peak body. We were delighted to represent 1547 Associate Members at a national level during 2020-21.

Accord Partners

Save the Children Australia
Sport Australia
Disability Sports Australia
Justice Connect

Our Supporters

Australian Government
Department of Social Services
Scanlon Foundation
Pro Bono Australia
SEEK
Aon
Hall & Wilcox
Breaking New Ground (BNG)

Board as at 30 June 2021

Michelle Ewington, Chair
Dr. Michael Drew, Co-Deputy Chair
Kit McMahon, Co-Deputy Chair
Kerry Harris, Treasurer
Esme Bowen, Secretary
Dr. Susan Alberti AC
Dr Norman Chorn
Amit Jois
Peter Lucas
Con O'Brien (Governance and Risk Committee member)

Staff

Mark Pearce, CEO
Dr. Sue Regan, Deputy CEO & Policy Director
Rebecca Rowland, Executive Officer
Helen Quiggin, Finance Manager (until March 2021)
Lou Malfone, Finance Manager (from March 2021)
Fiona Doyle, Communications Coordinator (until March 2021)
Kylie Hughes, Communications Specialist
Jenny Brain, Communications Coordinator (from April 2021)

Volunteers

Kerrie Gennie, Evidence Bank Curator
Lakshmi Bondu, Research and Policy Analyst
Vanessa Billy, Research and Policy Analyst
Emily Wobcke, Research and Policy Analyst
Catherine Howie, Research and Policy Analyst



Supporting Volunteering Australia and its members for over 20 years

Aon are proud to continue our long-standing relationship with Volunteering Australia and its members throughout this difficult year.

Contact our NFP team for a complimentary
insurance health check

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